

Overview

You need a firearms certificate issued by the police to possess, buy or acquire a firearm or shotgun. You must also have a certificate to buy ammunition.

How to apply

You can get a firearm or shotgun certificate application form from the firearms licensing unit of your local police force.

You must:

- complete an application form
- provide 4 passport photographs
- have 2 referees for a firearm certificate and 1 referee for shotgun certificate
- pay the fee for the certificate you are applying for

You can get the fees from your local police force. The fee amounts can be found from the firearms licensing unit of the police force where you live.

You must also prove to the chief officer of police that you're allowed to have a firearms certificate and pose no danger to public safety or to the peace.

A shotgun certificate won't be given or renewed if the chief officer of police has a reason that you shouldn't be allowed to have a shotgun under the Firearms Act. Or if they don't think you have a good reason to have, buy or acquire a shotgun.

A certificate usually lasts 5 years from the date it was issued or renewed.

Conditions

Your certificate will include a photograph of you and information about the firearm(s) or shotgun(s) you have in your possession.

You must:

- follow any condition attached to the certificate (the chief officer of police can vary these conditions at any time by giving notice in writing)
- be able to show your firearm or shotgun certificate if asked by the police

You must have a European Firearms Pass if you want to travel within Europe with your guns. You can apply for this at the same time as your firearms certificate.

European firearms passes are normally valid for 5 years or the length of your firearm certificate - whichever is shorter.

You can renew a European firearms pass by applying to the chief officer of police in your local police force.

Certain firearms are completely prohibited. You won't be able to get a licence for them and it is an offence to possess, buy or acquire them without the authority of the Home Secretary.

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